

2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1

The Greatest Danger to the Church



Paul 1st Came to Corinth about 51 AD on 2nd M Journey

Began Decade Relationships w/ Them, Visits, Letters, Prayers, Pastoral Concern

Corinth 200,000 people – Wealthiest City in Greece – 10 X's larger ATHENS

Like Athens > Corinth also FILLED with Many GODS and LORDS and IDOLS

Archeologists UNEARTHED 8 PAGAN Temples in Corinth

Most had DINING Rooms for Inviting Friends for Celebration Meal to GODS

As we STEP into 2 Corinth 6 Paul raising series of Questions...

VS RIGHT BEFORE & AFTER our Text Paul AFFIRMS his Love for Them

He's their Apostle, Spiritual FATHER, Brought GREAT News of New LIFE

1. Decision – *Who are Your Soul-Mates?*

a. New Life

Paul writes w/ CONFIDENCE: God did Amazing Thing in Corinth, Built Church

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus 1 Corinthians 1.2-4

Jew & Gentile, Prostitutes & Johns, Businessmen & Slaves, Intellectuals & Illiterate
IN Jesus X IN CORINTH –God making NEW CREATION– Old Passing Away

vs. 17,18 “I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

Corinthians NOT BEEN Christians VERY LONG

MOST their FAMILY—including some SPOUSES & Kids– still UNBELIEVERS
Classmates –CHILDHOOD Friends– BUSINESS PARTNERS– NEIGHBORS
What about RELATIONSHIPS w/ NON-Christian World...Recently their World

b. New Lifestyle v. 14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

“yoked with Unbelievers” – all who do NOT KNOW Jesus

Paul uses word UNBELIEVER 16 X's in 13 NT Letters – 14 in 1 & 2 Corinth.

CAN mean ANYONE who does NOT BELIEVE IN Lord Jesus Christ

Corinth > Unconverted Gentiles in church who continued in IDOL FEASTS

Especially means ONE who ACTIVELY WORSHIPS Idols and False gods

‘outside the sphere of God’s people, even if they profess otherwise’

PHARISEE Now FOLLOWS Jesus, Hebrew Script source many Paul’s IDEAS

These Verses filled w/ References & Quotes from what we CALL Old Testament

You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. Deuteronomy 22.10

YOKING Animals Diff HEIGHTS / SIZES / STRIDES – Painful & Inefficient

GIVES A LIST of SYNONYMS that FURTHER EXPLAIN “unequal yoke”

v. 14 “unequally yoked” – “partnership” – “fellowship”

v. 15 “accord” – “Portion... shared” v. 16 “agreement”

YOKE: Associations that demand Partnership /Not Casual Working Relationship

Determining whether someone is ‘yoked together’ with someone is a judgment call that depends on the degree, significance, purpose, and level of self-identification involved in one’s participation...the key question becomes: What associations determine who I am?
Scott J. Hafemann

Applying this Command of Ap Paul – 1st C & 21st C – NOT a SIMPLE Matter
NOT Matter of TICKING Off Box– Giving SIMPLE Answer– Lifetime of That
Who are my Allies? Deepest Influences? Greatest Pleasures? Heart-felt Passions?

Unequal YOKE defined by LETTERS to this church in CORINTH

Eating MEAT offered to IDOLS in HOME of an UNBELIEVER

MARRIAGES between CHRISTIANS and NON-CHRISTIANS

Speaking in TONGUES when UNBELIEVERS Present in CHURCH Service

LEGAL Proceedings against FELLOW BELIEVER without Seeking Church

SEXUAL Relations with PROSTITUTES or Close FAMILY Members

There is no call here...for Christians to separate from Christians for doctrinal or ethical reasons...no wholesale separation from unbelievers...no divorce if you are married to an unbeliever...no refusal to eat in the home of unbelievers...not refusing to allow unbelievers in Christian meetings...but a refusal to join pagan temple worship and godless rituals.
C.K. Barrett

Paul NOT suggesting Corinthians Live MONASTERY – Isolated from WORLD

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 1 Corinthians 5.9,10

The pharisaical attitude of exclusiveness was discarded by Paul once and for all at his conversion...he denied any policy of total withdrawal for fear of contamination from unbelievers. Philip Hughes

Xtian Filled w/ Spirit of God should be More Afraid FOR World than OF World

2. Deliberation – *What Side are You On?*

5 CONTRASTS to Help Illustrate Separation: Unequally yoked with unbelievers.

a. Reflection 5 Contrasts – MORAL Opposites - No PARTNERSHIP Permitted

vs. 14-16 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?

righteousness with lawlessness?

light with darkness?

Christ with Belial?

a believer...with an unbeliever?

the temple of God with idols?

TENSIONS

Righteousness and Lawlessness – We are to DO RIGHT No Matter the COST

Light and Darkness – Jesus is Light OF World – We are Light IN the World

Light of Glory of God in Face of Christ is OURS > We Share Him with Others

Christ and Belial – CAPTAINS and HOSTS of Light and Darkness

ONLY time Name Belial occurs in Bible – OT or NT

Similar to HEB word for “worthless” or “treacherous”

SATAN is the ULTIMATE TREACHEROUS One > ABSOLUTELY Worthless

Paul's OPPONENTS are Dividing the church, being DELUDED by Satan

the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4.4

God's Temple and Idols > 1st C people were Devoted to Temples and Deities

Our TEMPLE is NOT a PLACE but a PERSON – Lord Jesus Christ

Ref to TEMPLE is CLIMAX of Paul's String of CONTRASTS

Recalls NEW COVENANT teaching

5 Rhetorical Questions that ANTICIPATE a NEGATIVE Answer

Pound away same Nail of Truth – No HARMONY, No Holiness & Then HELL

These tensions hang together, since they are all aspects of the difference between the once-born and the twice-born. While we as Christians share many things with unbelievers, the things we cannot share make 'partnership' impossible without compromise.

Paul Barnett

SEPARATION Found thru Script: God calls Holy Nation be SET APART

Danger of IDOLATRY – HYPOCRISY – BAD THEOLOGY

The point is that one's religious affiliation must be a single-minded commitment. Paganism and Christianity are mutually exclusive options in Paul's view. How can the true sanctuary of God parade off to a meal in a pagan sanctuary?

Ben Witherington III

b. Responsibility

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and *to keep oneself unstained from the world.*

James 1.27

Hard to LIVE IN World and NOT be Affected BY IT?

Like SWIMMING & NOT Getting Wet // GARDENING & Not getting DIRTY

Living IN World like being in Atmosphere where you can catch DISEASE

But WORLD is RIGHT Where called ENGAGE, LIVE & LOVE Boldly, Deeply
 NOT to HIDE in our Christian BIOSPHERE – Plunge into the WORLD
 Cannot BE SALT and LIGHT from BEHIND Walls of the Church

This is not a call to split theological hairs, seeing those who disagree with you as ‘unbelievers’...Neither is this a command to bar unbelievers from the fellowship of the assembled church. Church is the best place for unbelievers, because they can hear the Word and be loved by the Body of Christ. Kent Hughes

Three Areas where NOT be UNEQUALLY YOKED with Unbelievers in
 MARRIAGE – Deepest Level of Human Love and Life Commitment
 BUSINESS – Where all your RICHES – Working Energy and Purpose Given
 SECRET Societies – Require Oaths, Initiations, Secrets, Exclusive Loyalty

If CONVERTED – WISDOM is Needed to DISENTANGLE from Partnerships
 Do NOT forced them to Immediate ECONOMIC Collapse or CLOSURE
 NOT Called to Leave Marriage to UNBELIEVER, Remain, Love, Serve, Witness

Separation NOT Where we Live & Work, What we Eat, Clothes we Wear
 Separate by Purpose, Hope, Love and Loyalty, Hope, Faith, Kingdom, Savior

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the
 kingdom of his beloved Son Colossians 1.13

3. Delight – *Where is Your Heart?*

a. With God

Chapter 3 Paul began to teach about NEW COVENANT > Concludes Here...
 New Covenant / New COMMITMENT to LOVE and LOYALTY Covenant God

There is no power in moralism to sanctify the heart.

Power to cleanse the heart & grow in X - only by Spirit of God & Word of God.

vs. 16-18 For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

BECAUSE he’s their FATHER – Paul points his Children how be RESTORED

PAUL’s strings Together OT Verses that tell his version of the PRODIGAL Son

These are not passages taken at random...they all say: in the Messiah, God has fulfilled his many promises, particularly to bring them back from exile...the real exile...was death itself. And through Messiah’s own death and resurrection this exile has been undone. It is now time for God’s people to come to him, home from the land of sin and death, home to the father who will receive them with open arms.

Tom Wright

If you really ARE God’s Returned-from-Exile-People THEN Don’t Make
Partnerships with Anything that Could DRAG you Back to DEATH
Don’t be PRODIGALS that Leave Home AGAIN to FEED with the PIGS

Almost without exception, these six generally agreed upon Old Testament references refer in their respective contexts to God’s promise to restore exiled Israel to their land...The point is this: The Corinthians were full beneficiaries of the new covenant’s deliverance and restoration. And as such, they should pursue separation and holiness.

Greg Beale

FLOOD of Biblical History – 1000 years WONDROUS Promises from GOD
Every PROMISE YEA and AMEN thru the RIGHTEOUS Obedience of Christ
All this MERCY, GRACE, LOVE from HEAVEN was for CORINTHIANS!
UNDESERVING Sinners like ME and YOU – Whole PEOPLE of God!

Very OFTEN Christians & Churches MISS this Message of Sovereign Grace
THINK Something they NEED to do Get Right with God or Stay Right w/ Him

LEGALISM – OBEY God to GET Saved

MORALISM – Be GOOD to STAY Saved

We are not made right before God by our moral behavior. We are not kept right with God by our moral behavior. Instead, our position with God is obtained completely by his grace.

Geoffrey William Bromiley

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Romans 1.17

God gave COMMANDS to people who were in COVENANT with Him

God gave REGULATIONS to people who were REDEEMED by Him

God gave LAWS to people already LIBERATED from SLAVERY

NEED the FINISHED Work of Christ and the FILLING of the HOLY SPIRIT

PARDON for our SIN and POWER for our SANCTIFICATION

New Life from the Savior – New Lifestyle in the Spirit

“The essence of Christian theology is grace, and the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude.”

John Gerstner

About MONTH ago went FUNERAL of my Life-Long friend John Svendsen
HOSPICE Care – BODY Failing / PAIN – Last Sunday on Earth > Bed > Church

TRANSFERRED to BIGGER, BETTER Church on FRIDAY

Next Sunday, 3 days into Widowhood, Wife SUSIE in CHURCH Singing Praise

NO Place RATHER Be – God’s People, God’s Presence, singing God’s Praise

ONLY God can Satisfy DEEPEST Desires and Fulfill CRY of our HEARTS

Obedience is the consequence of what God has already done for us, driven by what he promises yet to do for us.

Scott Hafemann

b. For God

Paul wants CORINTHIAN Church Healed / Healthy for Glory of God AND FOR the GOOD of the Nations – Going to REGIONS Beyond with Good News Church Not Happy Club or Holy Huddle but ARMY of God for Global Mission

Paul knew what was GREATEST Danger to Church of Jesus – Corinth > China NOT Persecution – Not Lose our Property – Not even Getting SHUT DOWN All those BAD things Can and Might Happen > We will GLORIFY Him

Greatest Danger to Church in Corinth > LOOKS like CORINTH – Not X Only way to REACH World is to be DIFFERENT from the WORLD

I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Leviticus 26.11,12

Church is IN World but World in PRESENT FORM is Passing AWAY

Do NOT get into DOUBLE HARNESS with UNBELIEVERS

One CANNOT be BELIEVER AND an UNBELIEVER at the SAME Time

PRESENCE of God requires the PURITY of his People

7.1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

Paul CLASSES himself WITH the Corinthians

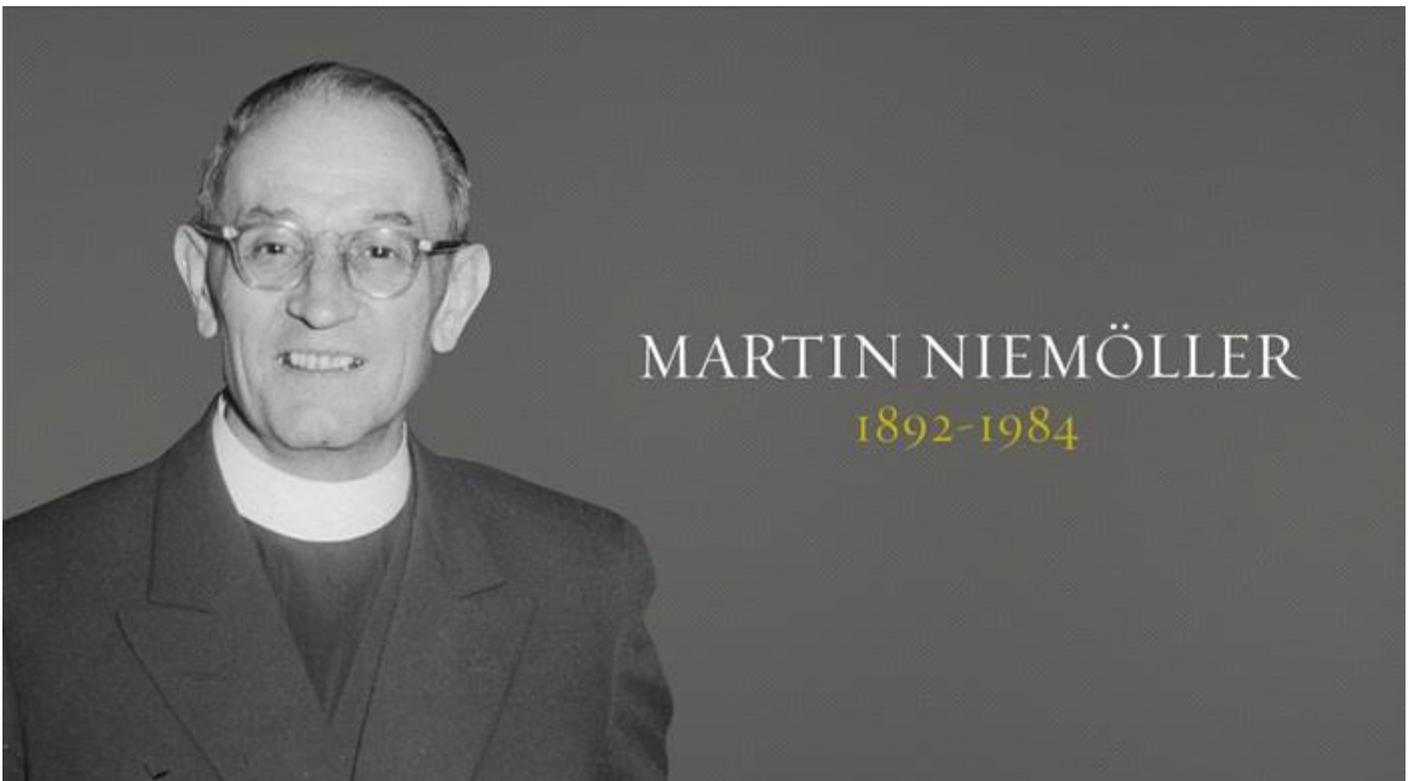
Paul INCLUDES himself and Colleagues as those Needing God's MERCIES

God can only dwell in their midst by dwelling in each one. John Calvin

We won't win the world by looking like it or by fitting in, but by being different — by our peculiarity. We'll bear fruit in this life when our roots are firmly planted in the coming new earth. Matt Damico

Cannot compete w/ Worlds Entertainment, Therapists, Sports, Coffee Bars
 ONE Thing we have – and can OFFER World > God's Truth > SEE & HEAR!
 If world only HEARS the Church & Cannot SEE Gospel in Church – FAILURE

By late 1800's MANY German Seminaries filled w/ Professors NOT Believe
 Authority of BIBLE and the SUFFICIENCY of Jesus Christ as Savior / Lord
 When teachers of PASTORS Don't have LIVING FAITH
 Not SURPRISING Many Sheep NOT FED Word > Church > Lifeless Tradition
 ONE Faithful German Pastor who STOOD Fearless for Jesus: Martin Niemoller



1933 As country was led by New Party called Nazi's – Leader Adolph HITLER
 450th Anniv BIRTHDAY of Great German HERO > MARTIN LUTHER

“How tragic it would be if the devil filled German minds with the delusion that what they needed was not the grace of God but the courage of Martin Luther... There is absolutely no sense in talking of Luther and celebrating his memory in

the Protestant church if we do not stop at Luther's image and look at Him to whom Luther pointed – to a Jew, a rabbi of Nazareth.” Martin Niemoller

The NEXT Night 20,000 German Christians gathered in Mtg Organized by German Evangelical Church – Bps in Robes in New Berlin Sports Palace

Sang Great HYMNS – Recited Ancient CREEDS – Prayers – Bible Readings

WIDE Agreement that German Church needed to Make Changes...

1. All Christians from Jewish background in church leadership must to be dismissed immediately
2. Bible needs to be examined and edited for all its ‘non-German’ elements – in other words de-Semiticized
3. Image of Jesus the Suffering Servant must be replaced by Proud, Heroic Leader
4. Pastor Martin Niemoller was suspended from his church

Not ONE Christian or Church Leader STOOD Up to DISAGREE

SADLY the STATE Church had IMPLoded from WITHIN

GREATEST Danger for German Church when it became just like GERMANY

The unbeliever's life is centered on self, the believer's on Christ; the treasure of the one here on earth, of the other in heaven; the values of the one are those of this world, of the other those of the world to come; the believer seeks the glory of God, the unbeliever the glory of men. Philip Hughes

Jesus: “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world...As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” John 17.15-18

The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble. Proverbs 4.18,19

2 Corinthians 6.¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, ¹⁸and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.” 7.¹Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.